

SECRET

OLC 71 - 0255

16 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Mr. David Abshire on Case Bill
Re Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty

1. This afternoon I talked with David Abshire, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, who said he and Martin Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, had had several conversations with Senator Clifford P. Case, the most recent today, when they told the Senator they plan to call on the Senate leadership to try to get support for legislation to provide overt funding for the Radios. According to Abshire, Senator Case seemed agreeable and indicated he would delay Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on his bill until late May in order to provide an opportunity for the solution suggested by Abshire to be worked out. Abshire said he hoped that, if he could get the Senate leadership to agree in principal to support the necessary legislation to provide overt funding for the Radios after Fiscal Year 1972, CIA support could be relied upon in the meantime.

2. I told Abshire that I was quite pessimistic that this would be possible in view of what I understood to be the adamant position of both Chairman Ellender and Chairman Mahon. I said in view of this I thought we would have to try to get something passed by 30 June 1971, since the Agency would probably be in no position to provide any funding after that date. Abshire said he didn't think State could possibly move quickly enough to accomplish this, and he suggested that I join with him in calling on Chairmen Ellender and Mahon to try to get them to relent and permit Agency funding for FY 1972. I said I would be glad to cooperate or accompany him, but I thought we should at least try to go all out for some kind of legislation before 30 June. I said it seemed to me that if the Administration and the Senate and House leadership, including Ellender and Mahon, plus Senator Case and Representative Ogden Reid, could all be lined up behind this objective, then quite possibly we might accomplish it. In any event, I said I thought this should be our maximum objective and any alternative should only be a fall back position.

SECRET

SECRET

3. Although Abshire remained skeptical, he indicated it was worth exploring. He suggested that Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Dick Davies join us in meeting with Mahon and Ellender and I said we might also include Cord Meyer and/or [redacted] who could argue the merits of the Radios on the basis of firsthand experience. In response to my question, Abshire said he thought we could count on active support by Clark MacGregor if called on, but this would not be needed in our initial rounds with Mahon and Ellender.

25X1

4. Abshire made the further point that once the Foreign Relations Committee had started hearings on the proposed legislation, it should be much easier to reassure skeptics in the Congress that the problem was on its way to solution, and thus turn aside probings into the "black budget." I said I wasn't at all sure we could count on this, pointing out that the main problem was not so much the issue of the Radios as the fact that this issue could be used as a device for opening up the whole "black budget" question.

5. We tentatively agreed to try to make dates with Mahon and Ellender for Tuesday, 20 April 1971.

25X1

JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

Distribution:

Orig. - Subj.

- 1 - Ex/Dir
- 1 - John Clarke
- 1 - OGC
- 1 - Cord Meyer
- 1 - [redacted]
- 1 - Chrono

25X1

SECRET